FDM 7-5-1 General

December 22, 2011

This procedure is applicable to region planning staff involved in establishing access controls independent of the improvement program and to the project delivery scoping process where design decisions due to existing access control and opportunities to meet other Department access management goals are determined for highway improvement projects.

The State Access Management Plan (SAMP) was adopted as part of the Connections 2030 statewide long-range multimodal transportation plan in October of 2009, and defines the vision and policy for appropriate access on Wisconsin's state trunk highway system. WisDOT has an array of access management tools available to address the Department's access management goals. Many of these tools are reserved for special situations outside the project development process, while others are more universally applicable and of high value for implementation as part of an improvement project.

1.1 Plan Purpose

The SAMP was developed to provide a system-wide plan to focus access management efforts where they would be most beneficial, encourage consistency in access management administration across the state, correlate the proper access management tools to proper situations and coordinate controls at region boundaries. The SAMP uses a Tier-designation approach to allow consistent application of the level of access management to be employed on any section of state highway.

1.2 The Plan

The SAMP is shown in Attachment 1.1 and is composed of five (5) tiers.

The SAMP tiers are defined correlating access control standards that maximize the following system mobility and operational criteria:

- Interstate or statewide mobility goals.
- Interregional traffic movement.
- Regional and intra-urban traffic movement.
- Traffic movement needs with individual property access.

Tables 1.1 and 1.2 show the correlation of specific access management plan desires for each tier of highway and tools to maximize the operational and mobility goals for the system. Department staff will follow these SAMP guidelines for new and existing access as closely as possible to achieve the plan's vision.

Region corridor plans, local comprehensive plans, several state statutes and administrative codes can help to support implementation of the SAMP. To ensure full integration into WisDOT activities, implementation of the SAMP should be an integral component of the corridor management program efforts, so that access management considerations are properly coordinated with department corridor planning efforts and local area land development decisions.

Table 1.1 Guideline for New Access Points

Goal for Access and Traffic Movement	Type of New Access Allowed
Tier 1 - Maximize Interstate/Statewide Traffic Movement - Generally reserved for C2020 Backbone and Connector routes. - High percentage designed/planned for expressway or freeway standards.	Safely spaced at constructed or planned grade-separated locations. Locked/gated driveways for emergency vehicles. Plan in place for ultimate removal of all private access.
Tier 2A - Maximize Interregional Traffic Movement – High Volume - High percentage is C2020 Backbone and Connector routes, but also includes significant number of other routes.	At-grade public road intersections, with interchanges at higher volume routes. Locked/gated driveways for emergency vehicles. No at-grade intersections within 1 mile of interchange

- Most are constructed/planned for 4-lane capacity. Expressway standards are highly desirable.	entrance ramps. See FDM 11-5-5 for spacing.
Tier 2B – Maximize Interregional Traffic Movement – Other - High volume 2-lane principal arterials. - Volumes warrant passing lanes, but may not have 4-lane warrants within next 15-20 years. - High truck volumes denoting commercial/economic value. - Connect multiple urban areas across state.	At-grade public road intersections. Widely spaced lower volume residential, commercial and field entrances may be allowed if no reasonable alternative or opportunity to obtain such access exists, and a long term plan is in place for removing existing access as opportunities arise. Bypass or turn lanes may be required to maintain safety. See FDM 11-5-5 for spacing.
Tier 3 – Maximize Regional / Intra-urban Traffic Movement - Similar to 2B, however, volumes for 4-lane expansion are beyond any reasonable planning horizon. - May only connect two or three urban areas. - Lower truck volumes.	At-grade public road intersections spaced for safe operation. Higher volume residential, commercial and field entrances may be considered assuming both the number and spacing of access meets department operational standards for safety, except those segments already under 84.25 or 84.09 controls. Bypass or turn lanes may be required to maintain safety. See FDM 11-5-5 for spacing.
Tier 4 – Balance Traffic Movement and Property Access - Lower volume, primarily rural 2-lane highways.	All types, provided they meet operational and safety standards (See FDM 11-5-5 and WisDOT Highway Maintenance Manual Chapter 9 Section 10 State Highway Connections)

Table 1.2 Guideline for Existing Access Points

When an existing access point does not meet the desired level of access control identified in the SAMP, it is often because no reasonable alternative access exists (a side road, for example) or no opportunity to obtain an alternative access exists. In response, decision and actions will consider the following:

- Alter all existing access points to meet departmental and operational safety standards as opportunities arise
- Develop a long-term plan to remove existing hazardous access points when opportunities arise
- Restrict access with a covenant, a formal sealed contract or agreement. When a property is restricted-access via covenant, its owners will not be granted further access beyond what the agreement indicated.

The SAMP recommends that all access decisions balance current needs with safety risks and be consistent with the defined access management system. WisDOT will work with the general public and local governments to achieve a safe and efficient state trunk highway system in the public interest.

1.3 Considerations and Strategies for Application of Access Management Tools

While the SAMP Tiers provides a high level system perspective, segment specific criteria has a direct impact on how easily or difficult it may be to apply any given access management tool. The single biggest factor is the level of development or urbanization along any given highway segment. These can be generally categorized as:

1. The Rural System
2. Routes through the Developing Urban Fringe
3. Routes in Developed Areas.

Different access management techniques are appropriate for each of these categories. (See sections in this chapter on the individual types of control.)

1.3.1 Rural System

Development along the Rural System is generally rather light but access management is necessary for preserving inter-city mobility and safety for highway users. In most cases, the entire array of access management tools, i.e. Freeway design, purchased controls, administratively designating "controlled access highways", and driveway permitting are all available and applicable for use to manage access on the Rural System.

The specific type of control used is determined by what Tier the specific rural segment lies within. A rural Tier 1 segment may be highly desirable for an 84.295 or 84.25 effort, while a Tier 4 rural segment may be constrained to simple access permits.

1.3.2 Routes through the Developing Urban Fringe

This category begins where the Rural System ends and extends to the point where adjacent land can be considered fully developed. The extent of the developing urban fringe will depend on the intensity of existing and anticipated development pressures. The endpoint of the Urban Fringe area is frequently at, or near, the functional urban area boundary. Zoning, annexed lands, and parcel size can all be indicators of a developing fringe when no actual development may yet be present.

In many cases, more than one local unit of government is involved in developing urban fringes and thus a high level of local government coordination is required to achieve and maintain a consistent access management plan in these areas. Developing land use and access management plans with local units is discussed in FDM 7-35-10.

Access tools begin to be limited on Urban Fringe highways. In most cases, new administrative access control under Wisconsin State Statute 84.25 Controlled Access Highways (s.84.25[1]) cannot be used since the statute reserves this tool to ‘rural highways’. If s.84.25 access controls were put in place prior to actual development, they are a powerful l tool to manage access in these areas.

It should be noted that because the total miles of 84.25 control is statutorily limited, the SAMP and the Corridor Management Program also identify corridors where existing s. 84.25 designations could or should be removed for re-assignment to other corridors. Criteria for removal include:

- Other superseding access control authority also exists on the same corridor
- The route has been deemed a lower priority than other warranted routes where no access control currently exists.
- The route has urbanized and the location of existing approved access points no longer warrants continued use of 84.25 controls.

To address these findings, region staff will manage the vacation, addition and continued monitoring of s. 84.25 designations on the state trunk highway system.

Other methods of access control in the Urban Fringe include deploying design and engineering techniques, driveway permitting, access covenants, and working with local governments when they develop their comprehensive plans, and during review of potential local area developments

1.3.3 Routes in Developed Areas

These are the extensions of the Urban Fringe Routes through communities. Access management on these roadways is generally possible only through retrofit techniques that can be applied when highway reconstruction or expansion projects are being undertaken. Not infrequently these routes may be under local control as a connecting highway which limits WisDOT’s direct authority and requires a higher level of interaction with the local units of government to cooperatively develop appropriate access management strategies.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1.1 Access Management System Plan

[1] To maximize safe and efficient travel on certain higher volume roadways, s. 84.25 designations allow WisDOT to use police powers to create up to 1,500 miles of controlled-access highways on rural, 2-lane highways that meet the criteria identified in the subject statute.